

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1373
INFO AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T LONDON 20522

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UK, UR, YS
SUBJECT: FCO ON SOVIET INTEREST IN ADEN

REF: LONDON 20169

1. PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE USE OF ADEN AS ONE OF THE CURRENT STAGING POINTS FOR THE SOVIET AIRLIFT TO ETHIOPIA, WE HAVE KEPT TOUCH WITH THE FCO MIDDLE EAST DEPT. ON EVIDENCE OF SOVIET INTEREST IN ADEN AS A NAVAL BASE. ACCORDING TO DEPT. HEAD LUCAS, EGYPTIAN CHARGE IN ADEN TOLD BRITISH CHARGE ON NOVEMBER 27 THAT PDRY AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD FOR SOME MONTHS PAST BEEN DISCUSSING DRAFTS OF A TREATY GIVING THE SOVIET UNION UNRESTRICTED FISHING RIGHTS IN PDRY WATERS, WITH THE SOVIET UNION PAYING FOR THESE RIGHTS IN HARD CURRENCY. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE DRAFT AGREEMENT, THE EGYPTIAN CLAIMED, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD PAY FOR FACILITIES AS USED, IN ADVANCE FOR FIXED PERIODS.

2. AS OF DECEMBER 13, LUCAS WAS NOT SURE WHETHER PDRY
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HAD GRANTED THE SOVIET UNION USE OF FACILITIES TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT THEY WOULD IN EFFECT CONSTITUTE NAVAL BASE RIGHTS. IF PDRY DID SO, HE THOUGHT IT WOULD REPRESENT A DESPERATE LAST RESORT BY PDRY, SINCE THE PDRY REGIME IS GENUINELY OPPOSED TO FOREIGN BASES ON ARAB TERRITORY, AND SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD WRITE OFF SAUDI AID TO PDRY. LUCAS SAID FCO KREMLINOLOGISTS THINK THE SOVIETS

WANT BASE RIGHTS GUARANTEED BY A TREATY, AND THAT THE SOVIET POLITICAL POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS ALREADY SO BAD THAT THE SOVIETS ARE WILLING TO TAKE THE REPERCUSSIONS FROM THE OTHER ARABS TO SUCH A BASE AGREEMENT.

3. MEANWHILE, THE SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS TOLD THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN JIDDA THAT, WHILE THE SAUDIS ARE NOT BREAKING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PDRY, THEY CONSIDER THAT PDRY HAS BREACHED ITS AGREEMENT WITH THE SAUDIS, AND THE LATTER ARE MAKING THEIR DISPLEASURE FELT BY WITHHOLDING FURTHER COOPERATION. AS FOR FCO MOVES, LUCAS SAID, HE HAS GIVEN UP THE IDEA OF PROPOSING THAT A BRITISH AMBASSADOR BE ACCREDITED TO PDRY NEXT YEAR.

BREWSTER

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